

as to whether oil and gas development takes place off its coast, then the least we should do is compensate those few States—Alaska, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama—for the duty they perform in supplying this Nation with a significant amount of the oil and gas it needs to function. After all, the OCS is now the largest producing area in the United States as more than 25 percent of both the Nation's oil and natural gas is expected to be produced from the OCS in 2003. In fact, the OCS is the largest single source of oil for the entire U.S., surpassing even Saudi Arabia.

Nuclear energy now provides approximately one-fifth of all electric power used in this country, but does so without compromising our air quality. It is the largest clear air source of electricity in the Nation today, generating two-thirds of all emission-free electricity. Nuclear power is perhaps unique among our supply options, as there is a large potential for expansion in the relative near term with little downside in terms of environmental quality or increased reliance on foreign fuel sources.

For future generations of Americans whose reliance on electricity will increase—and who rightfully want a cleaner environment—nuclear energy is an essential partner in our energy and environmental policy. The provisions contained in this title of the bill—renewal of Price-Anderson, incentives for the construction of new base-load nuclear plants, and the emphasis on encouraging hydrogen co-generation from nuclear power—recognize that nuclear energy is a vital component of our energy portfolio.

One of the most contentious debates we will engage in over the next several weeks involves the issue of electricity. We are confronting an industry that is facing difficult times from the dysfunction of California's market to a loss of market capitalization.

Amid this turmoil, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has proposed sweeping, untested changes to the business of providing basic and essential electric service to our constituents. Instead, we need to legislate with a caution not reflected by FERC's standard market design, SMD. While the bill before us took the important step of delaying any further action on SMD until January of 2005, there are a number of areas where I believe the electricity provisions before us come up short in addressing the shortcomings of SMD.

First, the State-Federal jurisdictional divide, which has worked exceedingly well in Louisiana to provide low-cost and reliable electric service, is jeopardized by the SMD proposal.

Second, I am concerned about the potential for increased rates for my retail customers as a result of the costs of accommodating the "merchant generation" that, over the past several years, has been seeking to connect to the electric grid in the southeast. While it

has added to the competition, it is also straining the grid, and under FERC policy may end up straining the pocketbooks of regular homeowners who would be forced to subsidize the interconnection and transmission costs.

Lastly, I remain concerned that we need more investment in transmission facilities, but do not have sufficient policies to encourage it. Transmission is critical to sustaining wholesale markets. I had hoped that the electricity title of this bill would have been reported out of committee with much-needed participant funding language in order to significantly increase transmission investment.

When we turn to electricity during this debate, I intend to offer several amendments to address these concerns.

We now realize that perhaps the best alternative to oil and gas production in this country is conservation. As our economy continues to grow so does our demand for energy. While we have made some noteworthy strides on the conversation front there are miles to go. When we talk about our dependence on oil in this country we have to acknowledge that there is no alternative that matches oil for cheapness and convenience. While we should continue to produce oil in this country where we can that alone cannot be the answer. With over 60 percent of our daily oil consumption coming from the transportation sector, we have to start there. The challenge to this body is how to strike a sensible balance by establishing a reasonable increase in fuel economy standards that will not compromise vehicle safety, unduly increase cost and significantly limit consumer's choices.

I think every member probably realizes the importance of ultimately changing the "coinage" of energy in the transportation sector from oil to something else.

This bill addresses that something else by authorizing about \$3.6 billion for an increase in hydrogen fuel research and development, demonstration projects, federal purchase requirements, and specific goals to move hydrogen vehicles out of laboratories and onto the nation's roads. A hydrogen economy that lessens our dependence on foreign oil is within our grasp.

During markup before the committee, I supported what amounts to a reasonable renewable portfolio standard. I continue to believe that it is a commonsense approach to ensure that renewable sources of energy—wind and solar—be a part of our electricity supply. Renewable energy is homegrown and does not need to be bought from foreign markets. The advantages of our ability to domestically produce renewables are obvious: protection for consumers from the prospect of supply interruptions outside the region or country which we cannot control.

It frustrates me to hear people talk about climate change as something that we can simply adapt to—no big deal. I can assure everyone here,

changing climate is a big deal for Louisiana. My state continues to lose its coastline and critical wetlands every year. We already feel the human impact and economic loss from hurricanes every year. There are some that think these storms could get worse with global warming, although the scientific jury is still out. We owe it to our constituents and to our colleagues in the Senate to give our best efforts, in this bill, to come up with a commonsense and effective policies to deal with this threat.

For conclusion, the challenge before us now is to acknowledge how much we depend on these traditional fossil fuels—our Nation still relies on oil and gas for 65 percent of the energy it consumes. That is not going to change overnight. At the same time, we must continue to make significant strides toward using the impressive diversity of energy sources we have at our disposal including nuclear and renewable energy. Also, if we continue to ignore the importance of conservation we do so at our own peril.

With a little balance and common sense, we can make the diversity of supply available in this country go a long way. All of the supply options available to our country have a substantial role to play in our future energy mix. However, none by themselves is the answer.

I yield back the remainder of my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MIGUEL A. ESTRADA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 21, the nomination of Miguel A. Estrada, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Miguel A. Estrada, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Executive Calendar No. 21, the nomination of Miguel A. Estrada to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Bill Frist, Orrin Hatch, Judd Gregg, Norm Coleman, John E. Sununu, John Cornyn, Larry E. Craig, Saxby Chambliss, Lisa Murkowski, Jim Talent, Olympia Snowe, Mike DeWine, Michael B. Enzi, Lindsey Graham, Jeff Sessions, Wayne Allard, Mike Crapo.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the live quorum provided for in rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF PRISCILLA RICHMAN OWEN, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 86, the nomination of Priscilla Owen to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Priscilla Richman Owen, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Executive Calendar No. 86, the nomination of Priscilla R. Owen of Texas to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Bill Frist, Orrin Hatch, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Jim Talent, Judd Gregg, Jeff Sessions, Wayne Allard, Mike Crapo, Thad Cochran, Mitch McConnell, Susan Collins, Don Nickles, George Allen, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Gordon H. Smith, John Warner.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the live quorum provided for under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the cloture motions I just filed will ripen on Thursday. This will be the sixth cloture vote on the Estrada nomination and the second on the Owen nomination. I am compelled to file these mo-

tions because we have been unable to reach a time certain for an up-or-down vote on these two highly qualified nominees.

The record will reflect the many times we have asked unanimous consent for a debate limit on the Estrada and Owen nominations, only to have an objection from the other side of the aisle.

As has been said previously, we will not give up hope that the Senate will be able to work its will on these judicial nominees. Senators can vote for them, Senators can vote against them, but these people deserve a vote.

Stalling and not allowing an up-or-down vote is an indication that the system is broken. I commend Senator CORNYN and others in their efforts to begin a dialog regarding the ramifications for the Senate of these judicial filibusters.

I will notify all Members as to the exact timing of the cloture votes on Thursday.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in 1953, Congress first proclaimed May 6 as National Teacher Day. Our Nation has changed in many ways over the past 50 years; however some things have remained the same. Teachers have always been mentors and role models to students and have made lasting contributions to so many students' lives.

Today teachers face greater demands and more diverse student bodies. Too often, they also face inadequate pay and unacceptable teaching environments. In a time of fiscal uncertainty, when budgets are shrinking and teachers have to rely on fewer resources, they still do the best they can to help their students succeed.

Little relief is in sight. Communities across the country will need to hire an additional two million teachers over the next 10 years to deal with rising student enrollments and teacher retirements. Congress must do more to help communities recruit promising teacher candidates. We can provide new teachers with trained mentors who will help them not only to survive but to thrive in the classroom. We can do more to see that all teachers and principals have the on-going training they need in order to keep up with modern technology and modern research.

In addition, we must find better ways to increase their pay and improve their working environments. It is imperative that we treat all teachers with the re-

spect that they deserve. Teachers have one of the most important jobs of all, and we must support them every step of the way.

On this special day, we thank the 3 million public school teachers across the country who work so hard each and every day to do their job. They truly are our community heroes and our national heroes. They have one of the most difficult jobs of all educating the young men and woman who are our Nation's future.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, now that President Bush has declared an end to combat operations in Iraq, it is important that we take a moment to pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. As we celebrate the swift and stunning victory in Iraq achieved by our men and women in uniform, we must be careful not to forget the pain and loss of those families whose loved ones fell on the field of battle.

In my home State of Indiana, seven families have suffered the devastating loss of a loved one during this relatively brief military campaign. Seven truly fine young men will not be coming home to victory parades and joyful reunions. This Nation takes rightful pride in the extraordinary accomplishments of our Armed Forces, and we rejoice that the war has come to such a quick end. But we must always temper these feelings with the knowledge that this victory did not come cheaply.

Today, I would like to pay tribute to those from Indiana who made the ultimate sacrifice in this war.

Indiana National Guard Specialist Brian Clemens of Kokomo, was the State's first casualty of this war. Specialist Clemens, who was 19, died in Kuwait on February 6—six weeks before the ground attack into Kuwait got under way. He was riding in a Humvee which overturned. He was serving with the 1st Battalion, 293d Infantry, one of two Indiana National Guard units mobilized to provide a robust force protection presence in the Persian Gulf. The units' 1,320 soldiers are guarding U.S. military installations and supply lines in Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar.

Specialist Clemens was an Eagle Scout and a graduate of Maconaquah High School, where he was a dedicated member of the wrestling team. Before being called to active duty, he was working at Wal-Mart and saving money to enroll in college. He is survived by his mother and stepfather, Cathy and Terry McCreay of Kokomo, and his father, Robert Clemens of Dayton, OH. Many of Brian's friends are still in the Persian Gulf region, and they have memorialized his death by wearing black wristbands.

Brian Clemens will be missed.

Marine Lance Corporal David Fribley, who grew up in Warsaw, IN, was killed on March 23. He was riding in an armored vehicle that encountered